

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of the claims

Claims 1-2, 4-7, 14, 15, 17-20, 24, 25, 43, 45-56, 67-74, 81, 84, 87 and 89-91 were pending and under active consideration in the subject application. With this Response, claims 1, 14, 24, 43, 81, 84, 87 and 89-91 have been amended. No new claims have been canceled or newly added. Hence, upon entry of this paper, the same claims will remain pending and under active consideration.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 14, 15, 17-20, 24, 25, 43, 45-56, 67-74, 81, 84, 87, 89-91 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wands *et al.* (US 6,001,990), Draper *et al.* (WO 93/23569), and Lemon *et al.* (US 2002/0155582), the combination in view of Fire *et al.* (US 6,506,559), the combination further in view of Fosnaugh *et al.* (US 2003/0143732), Morrissey *et al.* (US 2003/0206887), McKay *et al.* (US 6,133,246), and Alsobrook *et al.* (US 2003/0219823). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on the following grounds.

It is axiomatic that in order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, a single prior art reference or a combination of references must teach or suggest each and every claim feature of the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed combination of references does not satisfy at least this requirement. None of the cited references, either alone or in combination, teach RNA molecules at least 95% identical to SEQ ID NOS 11-27, which molecules are additionally capable of inactivating Hepatitis C virus.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of cited references cannot render any of the pending claims obvious. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 103 rejection.

Conclusion

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date July 20, 2010

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